3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

428 587 763 The sons inherit the property of their father. The wives of the deceased father are divided among the children, who may, and in most cases do, marry them, except their own mother. It is said that sometimes, when a husband is very old and infirm, his wives put him to death, in order to get a younger companion. On inheritance vide page 113. INHERITANCE

517 [361] 237 825 75 [20] 635 Their chief amusement is dancing. The houses of a village are built in a circle, leaving an open place in their midst. Here the inhabitants assemble in the evening, stretching themselves in the warm ashes or on a skin, or squatting on a piece of matbach; several small fires of cow dung are burning and spread a smoke of strong smell, which is the best protection from mosquito-stings. The events of the day are discussed here, the tobacco pipe and snuff-box put going from hand to hand. In the middle of this open place the trunk of a large tree is erected, in which the drums are suspended. With them signals are given in times of danger, but more frequently they are used to accompany the dances of the young people. These public dances are among the greatest events in the lives of the young Shilluks; even old men and women, though not taking an active part, are highly interested in them; sitting before the huts in front of the dancers they constitute a chorus, who accompanies the transactions of the younger generation with loud acclamations or blamings. The dances generally take place during the dry season; they begin at about four o'clock in the afternoon, or, in case there is moonshine, later in the evening, and last from three to five hours or longer. As a rule one village invites its neighbours by a drum signal given in the early morning of the day fixed for a dance. On hearing this signal the young people show a great zeal in preparing their body, hair-dress and the ornaments worn on the occasion. They go to the village in groups or single, men and girls separately. Usually the youths perform some war-dance in full arms at first, in which the girls do not partake; they form a large circle in four or two rows, and while the drum is being beaten, begin dancing and singing war songs. The dance consists in jumping on the toe and at the same time moving slowly forward. These rhythmical movements are from time to time interrupted by a group of dancers violently rushing out of the circle, howling and shouting aloud, brandishing their spears with fierce looks, and performing mock fights or playing pantomimes, in which they exhibit very remarkable ability. Scenes from the hunting, pastoral and agricultural life are represented with such a dramatic vivacity that they richly deserve the applause they earn. DANCING AND WAR-PLAYS

[574] On a given signal, spears, clubs and shields are laid aside and put together in one place, and now the second part, in which the girls partake, begins. The latter have till then been waiting in a separate place, where the female lookers-on [illegible] their own station. First the men form again a

16: Cann G-5 (ca. 1928) 1929 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN IDLE SHILLUK.

By Captain G. P. Cann.

WHILE passing through the river ports of the Central District of the Upper Nile Province a casual observer is prone to comment on the apparent idleness of the Shilluk, as if it was the normal state of the tribe; and although such a traveller is probably within his rights in drawing this conclusion from the abnormal conditions under which he meets the Shilluk in river ports—for the native of the Southern Districts of the Sudan has certainly achieved a high standard in the art of doing nothing when on holiday—he is desired to remember that the Shilluk seen on the river bank on the arrival of a steamer is keenly interested (and even amused) in all the strange sights that meet his eye: the steamer itself with its tiers of decks with the Rais and sailors on the roof, the motley collection of humanity on the barges, and by no means least the *luing* or foreigner with his lusted canvas and amazing dress and incredible customs.

Can one wonder, then, that the Shilluk is prepared to stand for hours and simply gaze on such interesting sights?

The writer is 'on trek' at the moment, and is so struck by the strong relief afforded by village life that he has fallen to the use of the pen in vindication of the libelled Shilluk.

Awaking long before dawn one finds that smoke fires amongst the cattle have been kept up assiduously throughout the night, and already shadowy forms are passing amongst the herds and moving a beast where necessary to get more benefit from the smoke.

Dawn approaches and the herds are becoming restless, so every man turns to to release them, and four or five youths drive the cattle away some two or three miles inland, where flies are known to be less troublesome, and a first feed of dry grass is available to start the day.

Almost immediately hosts of small boys appear on the scene, the smaller ones—from seven to ten years of age—to bring out the goats and sheep from the *luaks* in which they have passed the night, safe from

[p. 251]